

Office of Attorney General Terry Goddard



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Terry Goddard Warns Consumers to Beware of Veteran Gift Solicitation

(Phoenix, Ariz. – Feb. 5, 2009) Attorney General Terry Goddard today warned consumers to beware of a veteran gift solicitation circulating in Arizona.

The Attorney General's Office has received information that an organization is asking for donations for care packages to be delivered to hospitalized veterans for Valentine's Day. This organization seeks out donations and then asks the donor to leave the contribution in an envelope under the donor's front door mat for pick-up.

According to the Secretary of State's Office, this organization is not registered as a charity in Arizona. The Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center Hospital and the Arizona State Veterans Home do not solicit donations to purchase care packages.

Goddard offers the following tips to consumers when donating to charitable organizations:

- Be careful of charities with names that sound impressive or resemble those of other organizations. Some scam artists use names similar to reputable, well known organizations to confuse donors.
- Ask questions about the organization soliciting funds. A legitimate charity will be happy to provide information about its work.
- Find out how the charity will use your donation. Ask for information about its programs and for a copy of its financial report. Ask what percentage of the funds will be used for programming and how much will be spent on administrative costs. Reputable charities will be happy to provide this information.
- Do not make cash contributions. Always contribute by check. Make your check payable to the charity, never to the individual soliciting the donation.
- Remember to ask for a receipt and a tax deductible statement.
- Be very skeptical of anyone asking for an immediate donation by requesting your credit card numbers or bank account information over the phone.

- Be wary of appeals for charities that coincide with highly publicized tragedies or other dramatic events. Fraudulent fund raisers will try to exploit sympathy for those who suffered during the event.
- If you have any doubts about a charity, check with the Secretary of State at www.azsos.gov to ensure it is registered as a charitable organization.

If you believe you have been a victim of a fraud or scam, please contact the Attorney General's Office in Phoenix at 602.542.5763, in Tucson at 520.628.6504 or outside the Phoenix and Tucson metro areas at 1.800.352.8431. To file a complaint in person, the Attorney General's Office has satellite offices throughout the state with volunteers available to help. Locations and hours of operation are posted on the Attorney General's Web site, www.azag.gov. Consumers can also file complaints on line at the Attorney General's Web site.

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